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Distributed via Health Alert Network
Thursday, August 03, 2006, 13:47 EDT (1:47 PM EDT)
CDCHAN-00247-2006-08-03-ADV-N

Multi-state Investigation of Potential Rabies Exposure at a Summer Camp

Since August 2, 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been collaborating with Group Workcamps Foundation, and state and local health departments in 13 states, to investigate reports of the presence of bats at a summer camp and assess the potential for exposures to rabies. The camp lodging facility which is located in New Richmond, Ohio hosted approximately 440 teenagers and adults from 13 states (Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) from June 11-July 28. This advisory provides information about the investigation, an update for states that may receive inquiries due to public concerns about bats and rabies, and criteria for conducting risk assessments to determine the need for postexposure prophylaxis (PEP).

One or a few bats were observed to be present in the structure where the campers slept on at least four different occasions. At the time of the first observation on 2 July, two bats were present in the foyer of the building. One bat escaped and one was killed and discarded by an adult. The following week (9 July) another bat was seen in the sleeping area and it was similarly killed and discarded. A few weeks later, on July 23, another bat was seen in the sleeping area; it was also killed and discarded. On the night of the fourth incident (25 or 26 July), a single bat was observed flying above the sleeping area and then roosting on the ceiling 30-40 feet above the campers. Adult chaperones monitored the situation to ensure the bat was not mobile, before going to sleep. The Group Workcamps Foundation is working collaboratively with local and state health departments and CDC to notify the parents of each camper who attended the camp during the summer so that any potential exposures to rabies will be identified and managed appropriately. To date, no apparent direct contact with bats has been reported by any camper and the actions being taken by the Group Workcamps Foundation and the public health authorities are precautionary.

Similar potential rabies exposures occurred at a summer camp at Camp Potomac Woods in Lucketts, Virginia. A follow-up evaluation found that the presence of bats was common around the camp area, with additional bats found in several sleeping shelters. Prompt action by the part of the Loudon County Health Department and Virginia Department of Health identified 14 candidates for PEP out of 950 total campers.

Human rabies PEP is recommended when potentially infectious material (e.g. saliva) from a rabid animal or human is introduced via a bite, or comes into direct contact with broken skin or mucous membranes. More detailed information regarding evaluation for and administration of PEP is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056176.htm>.

Additional information about rabies and its prevention is available from your state health department and CDC, telephone 1-800-CDC-INFO or at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/>.

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issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES